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Volume 31, No. 8 August 1999

Carolina country

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Carolina country

The pride of North Coralina's electric caaperotives

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Carolina Country magazine is available monthly to members of North Carolina's electric cooperatives. If you are a member of one of these cooperatives but do not receive Carolina Country, you may request a subscription by calling Member Services at the office of your cooperative. If your address has changed, please inform your cooperative.

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"Currituck," by North Carolina artist Robert Johnson. A 52- by 44-inch acrylic and oil on canvas, one of a series of 10 that depict landscapes protected by the North Carolina Chapter of The Nature Conservancy. The 10 paintings, plus sketches and commentary, are on view at Blue Spiral 1 gallery in Asheville through Sept. 11. Phone: 828-251-0202.

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Cooperatives should be able to diversify services

By R.B. Sloan Jr.

R. B. Sloan

I would like to thank members of the General Assembly and Governor Jim Hunt for supporting recent legislation that keeps the door open for electric cooperatives to diversify our services.

Essentially, the legislation ensures cooperatives the right to invest in, operate, own or acquire other business entities that provide energy, telecommunication, and sewer and water products and services.

State legislators engaged in a healthy debate on this matter. The debate itself was helpful, because it allowed members of the legislature and the public at large an opportunity to consider the issues facing cooperatives, consumers, businesses and communities as the electric utility industry is restructured. When it came time to vote, the legislators agreed that cooperatives should continue to meet the needs of their membership and the wider community, whatever those needs may be.

Cooperatives exist to provide needed goods or services to their communities with a total community focus. It was in the interest of communities – including local businesses -- to form cooperatives to provide those services. The same conditions exist today. At EnergyUnited, we have an appliance warranty program. If consumer-members join this program and need work done on an appliance that is covered by it, we refer them to over 30 local appliance repair companies we have identified to perform this work. We could have developed our own in-house expertise, but we knew there were local businesses ready, willing and able to perform this service.

Water and wastewater service is another area that cooperatives can build and manage for communities that can't otherwise get them. In fact, cooperatives already manage water and wastewater systems in this state and others.

You as consumers are asking for utility services that are less complicated. You tell us that you want to know where your services come from, you want reliable service, and you want to trust your provider. Many of you say you'd like your home utility services on a single bill.

As always, your cooperative is listening to you. And so is the General Assembly. The legislation passed recently firmly allows us to respond.

R. B. Sloan Jr. is CEO of EnergyUnited, the state's largest electric cooperative, serving approximately 93,000 customers in 19 counties. He is also vice-president of the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation.

No more Sandy Ridge cookbooks

The Sandy Ridge Baptist Church in Taylorsville, which published a cookbook with 1,000 recipes, reports that it has sold out of the books.

The bird who wouldn't give up

One evening we returned home to find some mud on the front porch light. Thinking that it was strange to have mud there, my fiancée cleaned it off. Well, the next morning we saw what seemed to be the starting of a bird's nest. We didn't want the nest there because of all the disturbance it would cause us going in and out, So he cleaned it off again and laid his hat on it hoping it would distract the bird to build elsewhere. No chance! Within 24 hours, the bird had her nest fully built and was sitting on it.

Now we cannot turn our light on, because it would make the nest too hot. We are very cautious going in and out the door so not to disturb her too much. And my fiancée lost a good hat!

Now the eggs have hatched, and we have a basketful of wonderful little birds. It was worth losing the hat.

Jack R Varnadoe and Colleen
Laurel Mountain Estates
Otto

Electrical power in Costa Rica

In the May 1999 issue of Carolina Country, there was an article concerning the efforts that a co-op director, Dr. Max Walser, and several students made to bring electricity to a school in Costa Rica. Though the intentions were good, the information was inaccurate.

In the second paragraph it states, "People in some of the 'urban' areas have electricity, but the majority of Costa Ricans do not." As a frequent traveler to this beautiful Central American country who has family living there, I know this statement to be false. As of September 1, 1997, the number of Costa Rican homes with electricity was 93 percent, according to the Instituto Costarricense de Electricidad.

This picture of an electric meter was taken in the small Costa Rican town of Santa Elena, which is surrounded by a rain forest.

Still, the efforts of Dr. Walser and the students were truly generous and well appreciated, I'm sure, and I applaud them.

R.S. Bennett
Blounts Creek

Editor's Note: Our reference to electric service in Costa Rica was indeed inaccurate, and we apologize for any misunderstanding. We know better, especially since electric cooperatives are a major part of the rural Costa Rican economy and society.

Help Wanted

The mad bluebird picture

I am looking for information about a print or picture called "The Mad Bluebird." If anyone knows anything about how I can order this picture, please let me know.

Charles V. Hill
2806 Forbes Road
Gastonia, NC 28056

Advice needed: hibiscus and peonies

Can anyone recommend a spray I can use on hibiscus plants to treat them for bugs or diseases? Bug dust and sprays I've used damage the plants.

Also, what month can peonies be cut back and moved to a different location?

Sandra B. Wilson
RR #16, Box 806
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Protect your homes and communities from "predatory lenders"

Owning a home is called the "American Dream" for good reason: homeownership provides families with shelter and a way to build financial security, and creates stronger, safer communities for all of us.

But a growing wave of predatory lending by a small percentage of the state's mortgage brokers and finance firms threaten to rob many North Carolinians of their homes and the wealth they have built over a lifetime of hard work.

Predatory lenders and brokers target inner city, elderly and minority homeowners who need extra money immediately. The firms lure people into refinancing their homes with the promise of low monthly payments, but then add to the loans thousands of dollars in fees, costly insurance policies, large "balloon" payments, and high interest rates which make the loans impossible to pay back. Meanwhile, the brokers and lenders reap large profits—reportedly six times more than other mortgage lenders.

Most cases of predatory lending go unreported because victims are not aware they have been conned or are embarrassed to admit it. It is estimated that for every one case seen by a lawyer, another 100 go unchallenged.

One example, recently identified, is of an elderly Durham woman, whose only income consists of Supplemental Security income. She obtained a $33,800 home equity loan with settlement fees of $5,500 and an interest rate of 16.46%. Her monthly payments were set at $462/month for 15 years ($83,160 total.) Because her monthly payment is lower than the amount required to fully pay down the loan, she will have to make a "balloon" payment at the end of the loan term of $35,000, which is more than her original loan.

The Coalition for Responsible Lending, an alliance of financial institutions, religious organizations, community groups and others, is working hard to stop these kinds of abuses. In particular, the Coalition is working with legislators to strengthen state and federal laws governing home equity lending, since current regulations are not adequate to prevent predatory lending practices.

Individuals or organizations interested in learning more can contact the Coalition for Responsible Lending at (919) 956-4485 or CRL@self-help.org or visit our Web site (www.responsiblelending.org).

Michael E. Rulison, president
North Carolina Consumers Council, Inc.
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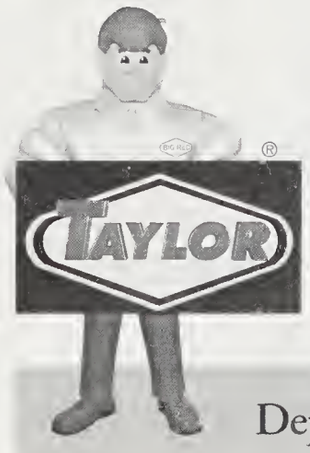

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Bruce Clark

Some of the legislators who attended Gov. Jim Hunt's signing of HB 476 are shown here. They are (from left) Rep. Wilson, Sen. Metcalf, Rep. Tolson, Rep. Smith and Sen. Carter.

Legislation says cooperatives can offer choices

The state legislature in June passed a bill that ensures electric cooperatives the opportunity to expand services by forming or acquiring other businesses.

The bill, HB 476, was introduced in the House by Rep. Joe Tolson of Pinetops and in the Senate by Sen. Stephen Metcalf of Asheville and Sen. Tony Rand of Fayetteville. It specifically clarifies the right of EMCs to invest in, operate, own or acquire other business entities that provide energy, telecommunication, and sewer and water products and services.

North Carolina's electric co-ops supported the legislative clarification in order to be prepared to meet to the changing business climate and to provide more choices for electric consumers.

At a June 16 ceremony when Gov. Jim Hunt signed the bill, Rep. Tolson thanked other legislators who promoted it. Among those attending were Sen. Charles N. Carter Jr. of Asheville, Rep. Mitchell Setzer of Catawba, Rep. Ronald Smith of Newport, Sen. Robert C. Soles Jr. of Tabor City, and Rep. Gene Wilson of Boone.

"This bill means a lot to rural North Carolina," Tolson said. "It is a measure that will go a long way toward improving the quality of life across the state."

Gov. Hunt added, "I know very well what you all have done for rural North Carolina and for all of North Carolina. I appreciate cooperatives. You provide excellent service, business opportunities, new jobs and chances for children directly."

Electric cooperatives sought this legislation in order to diversify their business operations and become more competitive in preparation for the changes occurring in the electric industry. Other electric companies and electric cooperatives in most other states already have the power to provide non-electric services. Being able to provide a menu of services is something customers say they want, according to the electric cooperatives' research.

Some services may not be available to communities. The cost of providing sewer and water services, Internet service, or natural gas in many rural areas has been prohibitive. The cooperatives believe this is a role they can help to fill and many are studying opportunities to provide these services.

The law allows co-ops to form for-profit, taxable businesses to provide energy services and products, telecommunication products and services, water and wastewater services.

"We debated a lot of areas during this process," said Chuck Terrill, CEO of North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation, during the signing ceremony. "As you know, cooperatives always work straight up and honestly. This will give us an opportunity to continue offering the service that we do and to do more for the communities of this state. Cooperatives are a significant player in the development of North Carolina and we expect to remain a significant player."

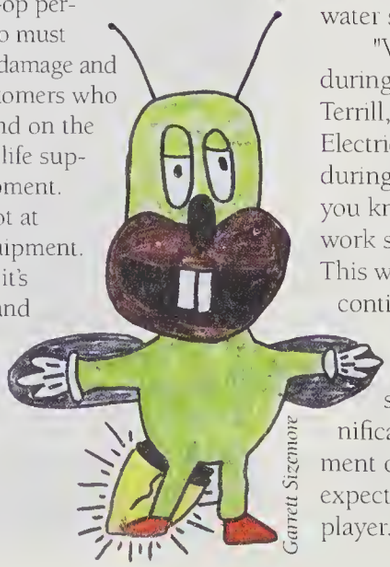
Mr. Lighting Says

"Don't shoot!"

Many utilities, including electric cooperatives, have a number of outages each year caused by people shooting at power equipment like line insulators, utility poles, transmission towers and transformers.

Shooting at power facilities is vandalism—a crime punishable by fines and/or jail sentences.

Shooting at power equipment is also very dangerous. Not only can someone be injured by the gunshot, but the resulting power outages present risks to electric co-op personnel who must repair the damage and to the customers who may depend on the power for life support equipment. Don't shoot at power equipment. It's illegal, it's senseless and it's risky.



Garrett Sizemore

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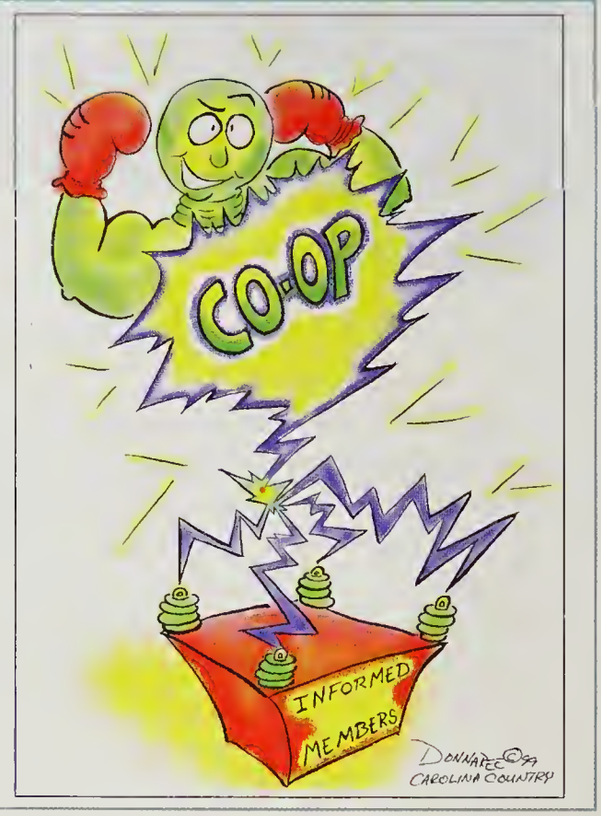


Y2K Readiness

State report says utilities are on schedule for Y2K

A state report filed in June concludes that the major regulated utilities in North Carolina are on schedule to be ready for the transition to the year 2000, and that all should reach that goal by September 30, 1999.

The report was issued by the Public Staff of the N.C. Utilities Commission. The Public Staff represents the interests of the consuming public in matters pending before the commission. The Public Staff is an independent agency that is not subject to the supervision, direction, or control of the commission.

The report is the culmination of 10 months of investigation, site visits, regulatory inquiries and communications with other commissions and entities conducted by the Public Staff's Y2K Committee. During this process, said James D. Little, Y2K coordinator for the Public Staff, almost all of the telephone membership corporations (TMCs) in North Carolina and the muncipal electric utilities association ElectriCities voluntarily became a part of the Public Staff s Y2K process. The North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation (NCEMC), the statewide organization of electric cooperatives, had done so in May 1998. The TMCs, ElectriCities and NCEMC are not regulated by the Utilities Commission.

The June report details how various utility industries are addressing Y2K issues. In addition, it sets forth the various means that utilities are using to inform the public of their Y2K efforts. It is posted on the Utilities Commission Web site at www.state.nc.us/Pubstaff/psy2k.

A number of major gas, electric and telecommunications companies are already Y2K ready, according to the report. "There are some components within a few companies that need attention, but those are manageable and well known and will be addressed in the third quarter," it says. "The third and fourth quarter will be used for further testing and fine tuning of each company's contingency plans."

"Because the major North Carolina utilities are advanced in their Y2K efforts," the report says, "the Public Staff intends to appear at public events through the end of 1999 to try to help educate the public about the good Y2K condition the utilitics have obtained through excellent planning, personnel and management attention and spending a lot of money, which they are generally not planning on recovering through higher utility rates."

Solar association sees renewable energy in an open electricity market

The North Carolina Solar Energy Association urges state government to allow consumers to choose who generates their electricity and to foster a more favorable economic climate for renewable energy.

THE NORTH CAROLINA SOLAR CENTER

In a report delivered during the North Carolina Solar Center's annual Solar Update, association chair Richard Harkrader said about 8 percent of the state's energy mix today comes from renewable sources, including hydroelectric, solar and biological mass. The association is urging an official statewide goal of 20 percent renewables by the year 2010.

Asked about the cost of so-called "green power" technologies as solar electricity, small-scale hydropower and wind energy, Harkrader said that the cost is competitive in some areas, but does not yet equal consumer prices of oil, gas and nuclear power.

"But the real cost of renewables versus fossil fuels involves environmental costs, health care costs and security costs," he said. "And these costs are not in the rate base. They are paid by all taxpayers."

Market research in various states, including North Carolina, shows that consumers are willing to pay more for energy that is generated from renewable sources.

> "We view restructuring as an opportunity to improve North Carolina's economy and environment by opening the market to underutilized energy sources -- renewables and energy efficiency. These energy sources are cost effective, beneficial to the environment, and will contribute to the sustainable economic growth of our state."
>
> N.C. Solar Energy Assn.

In this state, Harkrader pointed out, agricultural waste products could be a feasible and environmentally sensible source for generating electricity. Harkrader is an architect/builder in the Triangle and is an appointed member of the Study Commission on the Future of Electric Service in North Carolina. He is also a member of Cape Hatteras Electric Cooperative.

Consistent with positions promoted by environmental protection interests nationally, the 20-year-old solar energy association recommends that the state open the electricity generation market to customer choice while embracing "green power" in the process.

"We'd just as soon see renewables introduced more in the current market," he said. "But it is not happening, so we are proposing choice in the restructuring process and recommending changes at the same time."

The association's recommendations are:

- Allow consumers to choose their energy supplier
- Disclose to consumers fuel source and emissions information
- Allow small power producers credit for tying into the generation grid
- Require a "portfolio" of renewable energy sources in the state energy mix (20 percent by 2010)
- Establish a statewide "public benefits fund" (created by a quarter-penny fee per kilowatt-hour usage) for renewable energy research, development, education and installation.

For information about the association's position, see the Web site at www.mindspring.com/~ncsea/ or the North Carolina Solar Center Web site at www.ncsc.ncsu.edu. Phone: (919) 515-3480.

nothing *could be finer*

Teaching

Tributes to teachers you'll always remember

After our families, schoolteachers probably influence us more than anyone else. If you analyze why you do what you do – the work you chose, the friends you found, how you speak and write and dress – a schoolteacher certainly comes into the picture at one point or another.

Mrs. Kaufman slammed grammar into me in the seventh grade, and I still remember poems she required us to recite. (Of course, this wasn't too long ago.) I remember all the U.S. state capitals, thanks to Mrs. Weidman in fifth grade. Miss Burkholder told me I was the best writer in her eighth grade English class, and I told her she was the prettiest teacher I ever saw. She gave me straight A's. My piano teacher told me I didn't practice enough and that my sister played much better, so I switched to football. And today, I have a few bent fingers and a head swollen with diagrammed sentences and Rand McNally maps.

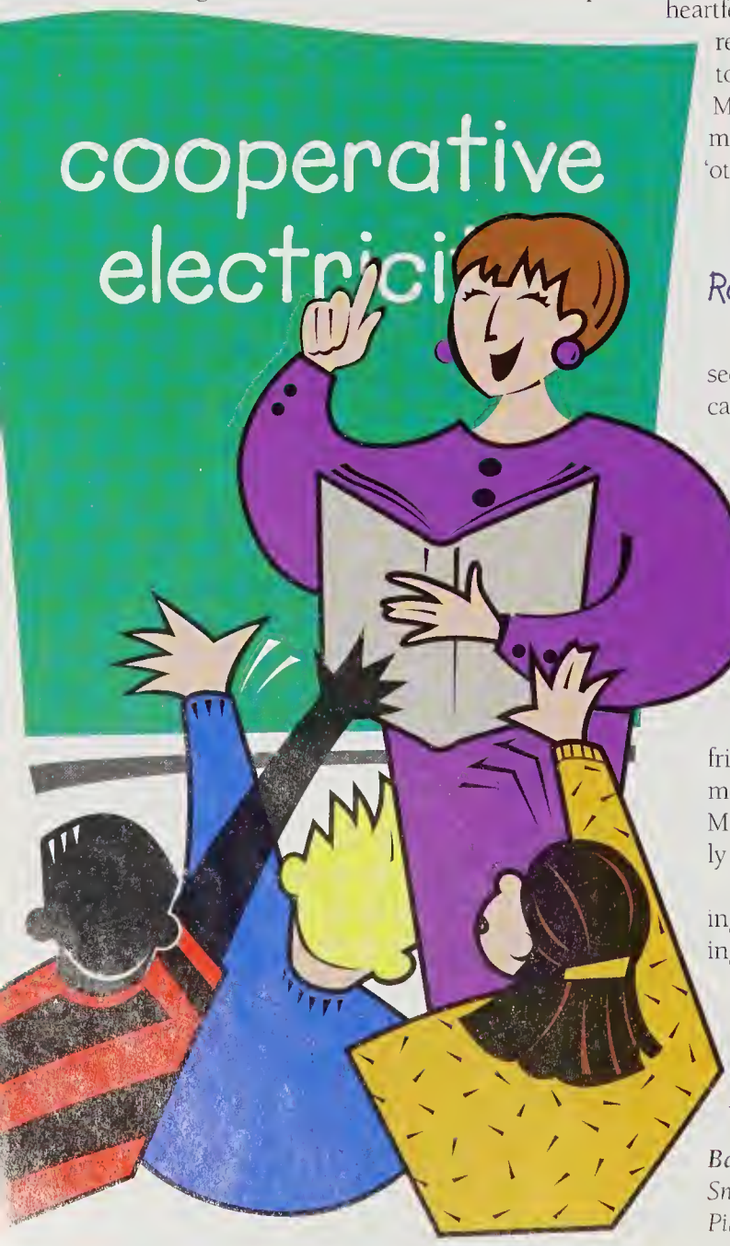
This month's theme inspired many heartfelt tributes to teachers. In fact, we received more submissions on this topic than any other so far. (Or, as Mrs. Kaufman would say, "You mean 'than any.' You don't need the 'other.'") People attribute their courage, determination, compassion, cleverness and a load of other admirable traits to teachers who paid attention, cared and persevered. Many of you are especially grateful for teachers who taught you to read.

I hope these testimonials encourage teachers who read them. And I hope you all consider telling your teachers how much they mean to you.

Next month we will run "the best stories about a country fair." (Deadline was July 15.) October will carry your "finest photos."

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this series, and especially you who tell us what you've enjoyed and learned.

--MG



Rachel Parris and her promise

Although I had been teaching almost 15 years when my daughter entered second grade, it was not until then that I realized what a difference a teacher can make in a child's life.

School had come so easily to me. I wanted to read all the time and still do; therefore, it was very difficult for me to deal with the knowledge that my child struggled with reading. Her struggle was heightened by the fact that she wanted to do well so badly and be as successful academically as her friends.

Most of those friends by second grade had been classified academically gifted, but not my child. How do you explain that to a 7-year-old? What do you say when all her friends are going to enrichment, and she has to stay behind?

Second grade was a turning point because that year every one of her friends was in class with her, and she and one other girl did not go to enrichment. My child's heart was broken. Despondently, I went to talk to her teacher, Mrs. Parris, to see what we could do. I will never forget the words of this saintly teacher.

"Don't worry," she said. "While the others are out for AG, we will be working extra hard in the classroom. Your daughter will get a double dose of reading. I promise you I'll make it right for her."

Mrs. Parris kept her promise; and at the end of the year when achievement tests scores came back, my child's scores were as good, better in some cases, than the students who went for enrichment.

Unfortunately, Rachel Parris died a few years later after a valiant struggle with cancer, but she will always be the finest schoolteacher I ever knew.

Barbara Adams
Snow Hill
Pitt & Greene EMC member

With Class

Mrs. Jurney's daisies

Mrs. Corrine Douglas Jurney taught seventh grade students at Harmony School in northeastern Iredell County for more than 30 years before she succumbed to crippling arthritis. When I was a state legislator, nearly 20 years after she taught me, I visited her at her home. Then confined to her bed she told me that had she life to live over, she would have picked more daisies.

I read sometime later that an English translation for the Spanish marguerite, resembling the American daisy, is "day's eye." Because several of her former students have testified to her picking them out and challenging them individually to study more, apply themselves more, and to achieve higher goals commensurate with their abilities, I'd like to think that Mrs. Jurney might really have been speaking of picking out more day's eyes from her students.

Being near the last class year before the US Supreme Court prohibition against school prayer, Mrs. Jurney required us to recite from rote memory both poetry and Scripture or face loss of recess privileges. She wanted us, she said, to remember these verses if we could remember nothing else when we were out on the battlefields of life.

Presidents Washington and Lincoln looked on us intently from large-framed portraits and bore witness with Mrs. Jurney to many of our renditions of Joyce Kilmer's "Trees," the Preambles to the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution, the song "The Old North State," Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, the 121st Psalm and the like.

With respect to character, Mrs. Jurney sought to put a stitch in the hem of a student's garment that would not come out. This remarkable teacher also left indelible stamps on our learning, not the least of which was the use of proper grammar from our diagramming sentences, geography of the states and their capitals and drawing dimensionally after our study of color charts. She also instructed us in the Palmer Method of Handwriting Proficiency and periodically sent our writing samples off to be evaluated by the company's judges. Does anyone recall as I do the rows of slinky-like ovals tilted slightly to the right and drawn with an emphasis on an arm movement rather than the wrist? Just about every time I sign my name, I still think of Mrs. Jurney's approving glance of letters well-written.

Roger Sharpe
Harmony
EnergyUnited member

The world's best

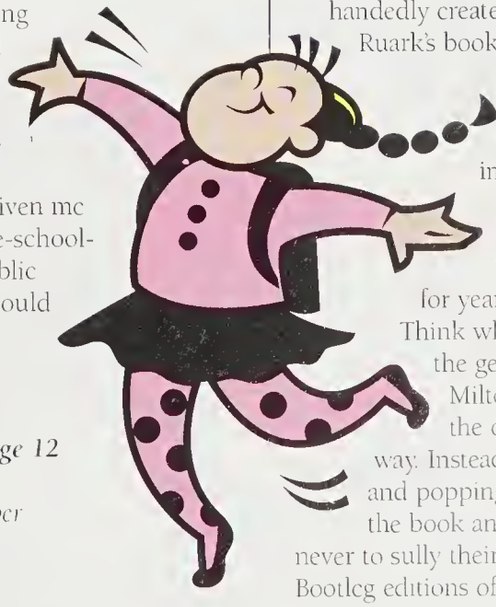
My mother has taught me at home for six grades. I went to public school when I was in kindergarten, and sure, I had nice teachers, but none can equal my mom.

When I get a wrong answer, she doesn't yell at me and say I'm a failure. She explains why I got it wrong and makes sure that I understand it. We grow closer together when we are learning lessons. It is fun to laugh over my silly spelling mistakes and be praised for my math skills.

Not only has my mother taught me school subjects, she has also taught me good values like being a good Christian, being kind to others, and being a cheerful worker. What more should a person learn?

She has also given me the choice of home-schooling or going to public school, but who would ever want to leave the best teacher in the world?

Meghann Evans, age 12
Walnut Cove
EnergyUnited member



Mrs. Midgette's compassion

The finest school teacher I ever had was Mrs. Midgette at Oak Grove School in the 6th grade, 1969. I battled my weight all through elementary school and had low self-esteem and endured a lot of teasing from the boys. Mrs. Midgette encouraged me, showed me love and compassion and rebuked the boys for their cruelty. She disciplined us in love, made school fun and interesting, and she encouraged me to use the talents and gifts that God had given me and made me feel very special. I wish I knew where I could get in touch with her to thank her personally for her kindness.

Pam Hursey
Wake Forest
Wake EMC member

A teacher's recommendation

In Fayetteville there was once a high school teacher who held up before the class a copy of Robert Ruark's "Something of Value" and denounced it as the filthiest book he had ever read. He then denounced the school for having the book in the school library, and promised to remedy this oversight.

I never met the teacher, but I have seen the harvest of his work. This single-handedly created a run on Robert Ruark's books in Fayetteville. A friend of mine who runs a used bookstore and has trouble keeping Ruark on the shelf tells me one customer searched for "Something of Value" for years.

Think what could be done for the general rate of literacy if Milton and Dryden and all the others were taught his way. Instead of assigning reading and popping quizzes, just hold up the book and warn the students never to sully their minds with such filth. Bootleg editions of "Areopagitica" and

more

"MacFlecknoe" would soon be going for $5 a copy in the schoolyard.

Surely this was the best literature teacher ever in Fayetteville.

Frank Laffitte
Fayetteville
South River EMC

Miss Valentine's gift

I recall that Miss Myrtle Valentine, my sixth grade teacher at Rockford Street School in Mount Airy, was silver-haired, attractive and ever pleasant. Since I was somewhat lazy in schoolwork, the good grades she put on my report card were too high. Her written remarks included "nice work," "read more," "wastes time," "has very good mind," "should cultivate intelligence," "use library." If only someone could have coerced me to take more seriously these encouraging and complimentary comments, maybe I would have earlier sought to expand my intake of knowledge.

What made me believe that Miss Valentine was really extraordinary though was that she, out of the goodness of her heart, arranged and paid for several private art lessons for me. Her greatness, of course, was not that she helped me, but that she sacrificed to help pupils who really needed help. I'm sure she knew I was an indigent pupil.

I have always since then felt much indebted to Miss Valentine. I have seen other teachers initiate this higher level of dedication. There is always need for more teachers like them.

Ray Scott
Lowgap
Surry-Yadkin EMC member

Miss Arey's book

I grew up in the 1950s and finished high school in the mid-1960s and can proudly say I had many fine school teachers. But the one who stands out is Kathryn Arey, who taught at Celeste Henkel High School (Statesville) in Iredell County.

Now Miss Arey -- and I repeat "Miss" Arey -- taught sophomore biology. At that time in my life (you know, when we think everyone over 30 is ancient), I was sure Miss Arey had even taught my dad in school but later learned that they were the same age and had gone to school together. Nevertheless, she seemed much older.

Miss Arey's love for the subject made learning biology fun, as well as challenging. She was sure all of us would love the subject equally as well as she did. Some did, a few didn't.

One rainy morning on her way into class, she found a student's biology book that had been left out all night. I know that student felt much remorse by the time class was over. Miss Arey stood at her desk and cried as she placed a paper towel between every page of that book.

Not until years later when I had the privilege of going to church with Miss Arey, and after she had retired, did I realize that teaching was so instilled in her that it stayed with her through life. Without batting an eye, she corrected my English on that Sunday, and I was in my 30s! It certainly didn't embarrass her to do it, and it made an impression on me I'll never forget.

Miss Arey passed away last year, and as I saw her for the last time, I recalled something she repeatedly said and that every student she taught would remember: "I say what I mean, and I mean what I say." She did, and we loved and respected her for it.

Hazel Sutton
Statesville
EnergyUnited member

"First Lady" Mrs. Connie Gibson

Mrs. Connie Gibson completed her college and teaching credentials by the time she was 20. We knew only that she was a widow and had no children. We certainly did not ask nor did we want to know more. Her mystique and reticence were part of her charm. Her tall, graceful beauty, impeccable dress (complete with stylish high heels) and almost ethereal presence was a great contrast to our rural teen lives of the 1960s.

Her students bestowed on her the title "First Lady." Indeed, she was the regal magnolia among the southern pines. The days of "Camelot" and Jackie Kennedy did not impress us; after all we had Miss Connie. With perfect diction and exquisite but never, ever, superior manners, she brought life to Shakespeare and Dickens. Into ours she brought proper grammar and the sheer joy of knowledge. Each September from the 7th all the way through to the 12th grades, we entered her classroom in eager anticipation and were never disappointed. Dressed in our back-to-school finery, our skins burned and tan from long, hot summers of tobacco gathering and picking garden vegetables, we welcomed the serenity of her soft voice.

Miss Connie took country boys and girls and turned them into lawyers, doctors, teachers and writers. All were endowed by her with a sense of self-worth.

She never raised her voice nor made threats. By a mere look from her soft, brown eyes even the most loutish boy would become apologetic and obedient. To be in her bad graces was a punishment not to be endured.

As was befitting, she was the homeroom teacher for the seniors. That was the year that you really belonged to her, and both students and faculty knew it. When she led her seniors into the gym or auditorium for a program, everyone stood up until her class was seated. The lower classmen never objected because they knew that in a few years their turns would come.

With inexplicable magic, she lit a spark that all of her "children" still carry. The flame of imagination and the search for beauty in life was an eternal legacy to us. Her honest praise was treasured by those who earned it. Her annual Christmas present to us was her reading aloud of O'Henry's beautiful story "The Gift of the Magi." We sat entranced year after year. More than one of the tough guys in class was seen surreptitiously wiping his eyes.

In my recent visit to her, still beautiful and stately, she advised me to continue writing. She knows how much I enjoy it. Miss Connie is the only teacher who has told me that she considers me to be one of her children, and that she is proud of me and loves me. I believe it. Miss Connie said it.

Linda Todd-White
Saluda
Rutherford EMC member

Send us your stories and photos. Earn $50.

When they choose a selection for publication, judges seem to like stories that are clearly expressed, from the heart, and full of North Carolina character. (Most of those we receive have some or all of these qualities, so choosing a few is difficult work.)

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. Only one entry per household per month.
3. Typed or e-mail, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
4. Include your name, mailing address, electric co-op, and phone number.
5. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. *(We will not return others.)*
6. We pay $50 for each submission published in this series.
7. Send to Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616. Or by e-mail: carolina.country@ncemcs.com

Remaining 1999 Themes

October
The Finest North Carolina Photo
N.C. people or places, color or B&W.
Deadline: August 15

November
My Favorite Holiday Memory
Any holiday.
Deadline: Sept. 15

December
What We Can Do in 2000?
Your advice for the new year.
Deadline: Oct. 15

Attention Teachers

The Bright Ideas Grant Program, sponsored by North Carolina's electric cooperatives and their statewide organization, the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation, is accepting applications from teachers for the 1999-2000 school year. In most cases, the application deadline is Sept. 24, but check with your cooperative to make sure. For example, Four County EMC posts a Sept. 7 deadline and Union EMC's is Oct. 22.

Funds generally are made available by the end of November, but that varies among co-ops as well.

Since its inception in 1994, Bright Ideas has funded more than 1,800 projects and touched approximately 500,000 students across the state, including areas served by electric cooperatives and those that are not.

In 1998, more than 2,000 applications were submitted for Bright Ideas funding. Grants totaling $350,000 were awarded for 1998-99, raising the program's total contributions to Tar Heel educators to $1.5 million. The total includes $367,000 that was awarded from local co-op funds especially to assist schools in the communities they serve. The program is open to all North Carolina public school educators serving grades K-12, and it supports projects in any discipline.

The grants, which underwrite innovative instructional projects the schools could not otherwise afford, are awarded annually in a competitive evaluation process involving volunteer judges throughout the state. They are not awarded for educator salaries, released time or expenses related to professional development.

Applications can be submitted in various ways, including postal mail, via e-mail, or online at www.ncemcs.com. Faxed applications will not be accepted. For more information, see the Web site www.ncemcs.com or send e-mail to bright.ideas@ncemcs.com or call (800) 662-8835, ext. 3034.

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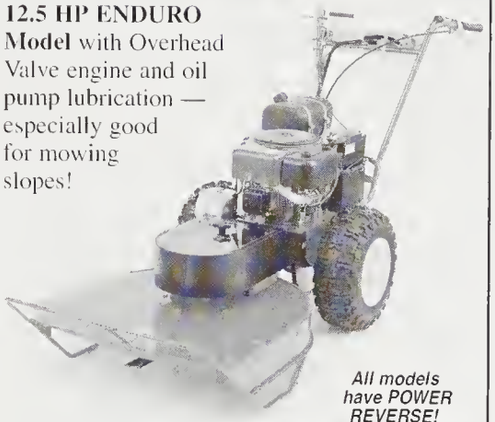

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Opening Opportunities at Roanoke Electric Cooperative

photo by Ken Hammond, USDA

Matthew Grant (left) encouraged black membership on the board, which later hired Curtis Wynn as manager

Last December a massive ice storm struck northeastern North Carolina just before Christmas. Among the hardest hit areas was the territory served by the Roanoke Electric Cooperative. About 3,000 residents had no electricity. For three long hard days, from Dec. 23-26, co-op employees scrambled round-the-clock to repair the damage caused to major circuits and a substation. By Saturday afternoon, the day after Christmas, the lights were on for all of the co-op's members.

For Roanoke's manager Curtis Wynn, the storm was reminiscent of the power outages he had experienced with hurricanes when working for a Florida electric cooperative. It was also symbolic of his tenacity and ability to overcome obstacles in order to obtain his personal and professional goals.

A tribute to the community

Curtis Wynn grew up in a poor family, one of 10 children. He worked his way through college and earned a business degree. His resume includes nearly 20 years of progressive experience at electric cooperatives. He has a wife and children. But unlike any other chief executive officer among U.S. electric co-ops, Curtis Wynn is black. He is the first black CEO of an electric co-op in North Carolina, and perhaps the only black CEO of a rural utility in the nation.

Roanoke Electric also is the only known electric co-op among roughly 1,000 nationwide to have not just a black CEO, but at the same time a black board president and a black majority of directors.

"The credit for this goes to the people of this area who have struggled to provide opportunities for minorities," says Roanoke Electric's Marshall Cherry, manager of member services and marketing. Cherry himself is the only black in North Carolina to hold that title at an electric co-op.

Based in the town of Rich Square, Roanoke Electric was formed in 1938 and named for the nearby Roanoke River. It serves parts of seven counties: Northampton, Halifax, Bertie, Hertford, Gates and the northern parts of Chowan, Perquimans and Martin. The co-op has 13,800 members, 55 percent of whom are black, and many of whom are dependent on agriculture for their living. Their farms raise tobacco, peanuts, corn and cotton.

As a co-op, the membership votes to elect a board of directors, so in fact, the members of Roanoke Electric are responsible for making their co-op the first in the state to put blacks in key leadership positions. But Wynn is even more specific. "It's all because of the vision of Matthew Grant," he says.

Leading the way

At 80, Matthew Grant has seen change of almost every kind sweep his North Carolina homeland. Born poor and black, Grant grew up on a farm in Northampton County, not far from where he lives today. When he was 6, his father died. His mother, says Grant, remarried "a good man" who helped pull the family through the Depression. When World War II broke out, Grant went to work in the shipyards of Virginia. He married and, after the War, returned home to farm. He became a member of Roanoke Electric in 1947.

But Grant wasn't happy with what he saw. Blacks were almost never hired at Roanoke Electric. "The janitor was black," Grant says. Black members, who made up the majority of the county, were not always treated well. "If you had a problem with your electricity or your bill, you were talked to like you were nothing," he says.

But through the 1950s and 1960s, as the civil rights movement spread, the black members of Roanoke Electric began to seek a greater voice in their cooperative.

"In March 1969, due to pressure from the membership, the board appointed Rascoe Gilliam and me to serve as directors," says Grant. "At the annual meeting a few months later, we were voted in by the membership."

The two men had become the first black board members of any electric cooperative in North Carolina. But even then, Grant felt he had little power. "The other board members weren't rude but I had no real say-so until we finally got a black majority," Grant says. "It took more than 20 years to get to that place."

As other board seats became vacant, Grant encouraged more black members to run for the board. "I'd tell them that the board is what makes the policies of the co-op," he says. "Once you're on the board, you can have some say-so. You'll be able not only to get to

By Catherine Merlo

know the general manager but you'll be able to vote in the one that you think is best."

By 1991, Roanoke Electric's board had a black majority. Five of its nine directors were black. In 1993, Matthew Grant was elected board president. "My first goal as president was to get more jobs for blacks at our co-op," he says.

And then in 1997 another opportunity arose. Roanoke Electric's general manager, Eugene W. Brown Jr., who had supported and advanced the addition of blacks to the co-op's board and staff, announced his plans to retire. It was the board's responsibility to hire a new manager. And just maybe, Grant thought, it was a chance to open the door to a black candidate.

"We want to be more than an electric company. We want to make Roanoke Electric visible in the community we serve by giving back as much as we can."

– Curtis Wynn

photo by Ken Hammond, USDA

Roanoke Electric is a sponsor of the electric vehicle technology program at Northampton County High School East.

Opening the door

Five hundred miles away, at an electric cooperative in Florida, Curtis Wynn had reached a turning point in his career. For 17 years, he had worked at the co-op, starting as a truck washer while still in high school. He had risen through several positions to become vice president of marketing and member services. He reported directly to the CEO.

But when the CEO's position at the Florida co-op had come open in 1997, Wynn says he received only a perfunctory first interview. "I was given no official reason except that someone else was more qualified than I," says Wynn.

Only 34, Wynn began to ponder his career's future. Then Wynn got a phone call from a friend in Atlanta, who told him about the CEO opening at Roanoke Electric. Wynn rebuffed his friend's suggestion, believing the same hiring dynamics were in place at Roanoke Electric, too. But his friend, who is white, told Wynn about Roanoke Electric's black-majority board, and that it was rumored black applicants might have a chance. "The more I inquired," Wynn says, "the better I felt about what was happening at Roanoke."

Once again, Wynn got only one interview. But this time, the outcome was much different. Two hours after the interview, Roanoke Electric extended him an offer. He accepted, and began managing the co-op on Oct. 13, 1997.

"This is the opportunity of a lifetime and one that I never imagined would become a reality," Wynn says. He praises Roanoke Electric's diverse board for giving him a fair chance to compete for the position. "I was chosen based on my merits and abilities, nothing else," he says.

Roanoke's board had interviewed both white and black candidates. "But Curtis was the one with the best resume," says Matthew Grant. "He was the one we liked the best."

Making changes

Wynn is not only the first black CEO at an electric co-op but, at 35, is one of the youngest. He has been described as eager, aggressive and knowledgeable. Already, Wynn has begun implementing changes he thinks are necessary to bring progress to Roanoke Electric, its members and its 57 employees. He has worked to modernize the co-op's computer network system and to boost staff development.

"We have an excellent group of employees who are eager to move our organization into the next century," he says. "They have expanded their horizons to better serve our members."

Wynn also is trying to get local youths to take advantage of opportunities, such as Rural Electric Youth Tours and scholarships, which can show them the opportunities that lie outside of their immediate environment. To co-op members, Wynn stresses the importance of attending meetings, of joining committees, of running for various positions. "If you're not in that group of decision makers, you never know about the opportunities and possibilities," he says.

To help improve the economic base in Roanoke Electric's service area, Wynn has established an economic development department at the co-op.

The leadership Wynn provided in dealing with the ravages of the ice storm last December is just one example of how the co-op's new manager is fulfilling the promise the board sees in him. "Curtis is doing a tremendous job of leading this organization into the next millennium," says Matthew Grant, "and everyone who works for us is proud that we found him."

If there was ever a high point in Wynn's life, it's now, he says, "career-wise, family-wise, spiritually."

And if Roanoke Electric ever had a finer hour, it would be hard for people like Matthew Grant and Marshall Cherry to know when that might have been. They are convinced that their co-op shines like a beacon, offering proof that opportunities do exist for minorities in the electric cooperative industry.

Catherine Merlo is the former editor of Rural Cooperatives magazine, where this article first appeared this spring. The magazine is published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"Hate Diets? Try Vinegar To Lose Pounds, Inches."

If you want to lose weight and keep it off -- hate dieting and are tired of taking pills, buying costly diet foods or gimmick "fast loss" plans that don't work-- *you'll love the easy Vinegar way to lose all the pounds you want to lose. And keep them off!*

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Z.L., Pensacola, FL

Above statements are extracted from letters received by the publisher from readers

* *Testimonials are atypical, your weight loss may be more or less.*

He brought the roses

Emmett Patterson retires from Pee Dee EMC

At Pee Dee EMC's office in Wadesboro, they are wondering who will bring the roses.

While some offices have the reliable mate who always brings the doughnuts, the Pee Dee Wadesboro office has one who brings roses. But after July 29, he'll no longer come into the office every day.

He's Emmett Patterson, the boss of Pee Dee Electric and a master of rose bushes. At the end of July he will have retired as executive vice president and general manager of Pee Dee EMC after nearly 39 years with the cooperative.

Emmett S. Patterson has made significant contributions not only to the rural electric program in North Carolina, but also to the development of Anson County. He was a member and chairman of the Anson County Planning Board that has in many ways shaped the look and charted the course of the county. He also was president of the county's Chamber of Commerce for a time.

Born the youngest of six children in Rowan County, Emmett Patterson worked the family farm with his brothers and father, Robert Lee Patterson, and mother, Carrie Sloop Patterson. He graduated from China Grove High School in 1955 and N.C. State University in 1959. In college, he joined the Reserve Officers Training Corps and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Army's Military Police Corps. He served six months active duty at Fort Gordon, Ga., and eight years in the active Army Reserve, completing his assignment as a First Lieutenant.

He married Emily Mears of Blackville, S.C., and they have two daughters, Lara and Amy.

In 1960 he went to work with Pee Dee EMC as electrification advisor and member services director. He was the public relations man, producing the co-op's monthly newsletter and handling advertising, as well as assisting members with their heating and air conditioning needs. Four years later, he was granted a leave of absence to earn his Master of Business Administration degree at UNC-Chapel Hill, working with the co-op during school breaks.

He returned to the co-op's Wadesboro office in January 1966 as staff assistant for the general manager. For the next 15 years he conducted the co-op's financial forecasting, wage and salary reviews, and loan applications. He coordinated annual work plans and participated in the co-op's expansion and new office construction in 1979. When the general manager was out, Emmett Patterson was in charge.

He learned the ropes from Heyward H. McKinney, a legendary figure in the history of Pee Dee Electric and the statewide cooperative organizations, who still lives in Wadesboro. McKinney was Pee Dee's general manager for 35 years. When he retired in the spring of 1981, the co-op's board appointed Emmett Patterson as his successor.

Bryant Braswell Jr., manager of Member Services in Pee Dee EMC's Wadesboro district, has worked with Patterson for 34 years. "Not only has Emmett been a good boss," Braswell says, "he has been my friend for the last 34 years. All of us at Pee Dee EMC will miss him and wish him a happy and healthy retirement."

His quiet and unassuming manner shields a strong businessman who does not shy away from difficult situations. As a member of the cooperatives' statewide Power Supply Committee for the past 17 years and chairman for the last 12, he has led negotiations culminating in monumental decisions regarding purchasing power for all the co-ops.

"Emmett enjoys planning for the future and negotiating the settlement of disputes," Braswell says. "A situation that I vividly remember was his involvement with Pee Dee EMC's service territory with Duke Power Company and CP&L."

"Emmett has always been what I call a 'figure head,'" Braswell says. "He excels in dealing with numbers and finances, and he loves solving problems mathematically. The man absolutely loves a graph or a chart. He is a meticulous record-keeper who kept all types of variables charted or graphed on many of Pee Dee EMC's operations."

The boss who brought roses into the office for the women also had other well-known traits, Braswell says. "Occasionally when puzzled, he'd be sitting at his desk or walking the halls with his arms folded and one eyebrow raised about two inches higher than the other one. When one eyebrow was jacked up, all of us knew that he was about to make a decision."

An elder and choir member of the First Presbyterian Church in Wadesboro, Patterson also has served in leadership positions with the Jaycees, Anson United Way, PTA, Rotary Club and Anson Savings Bank. One glance inside his EMC office and you'll understand his reputation as an outdoorsman, hunter, fisherman and "jackleg" taxidermist.

Emmett Patterson says that in retirement, he and his wife will do some traveling. He will have more time for the outdoors and his woodworking pursuits. And, most likely, he'll tend his roses.

Maybe from time to time he'll take some of those roses into the EMC office, too.

— Michael E.C. Gery and Bryant Braswell

Donnie Spivey appointed Pee Dee EMC's CEO

Donald H. Spivey has been appointed by the board of directors as chief executive officer of Pee Dee Electric Membership Corporation, succeeding Emmett S. Patterson.

"Donnie" Spivey has been with the cooperative nearly 14 years. He began as a staff assistant to the general manager and was promoted to district manager for the Wadesboro district.

He has a B.S. in accounting and an M.B.A., both earned at Wingate University. He and his wife, Geneca, have two children, a 2-year-old daughter Kendall and a 3-month old son Ian. They live in the Burnsville community of Anson County.

The Tobacco Pack Houses of the Carolina Countryside

Dorman Whitely, a retired tobacco farmer and volunteer at the Tobacco Farm Life Museum, opened a modern bulk curing barn on a neighbor's farm to show how tobacco is cured today.

Background illustration by Milton Wood.

In the fields and around the farms on North Carolina's highways and back roads are old, weathered sheds, many covered with vines and listing slightly to one side. Although they may vary slightly in structure, they do have a basic design. Once they have caught your eye, you realize they are all one-and-a-half to two stories high and have a sloping shed roof off one or two sides.

These are pack houses, or pack barns, and every farm family in eastern North Carolina who grew flue-cured or "bright leaf" tobacco in the late 1800s and early 1900s had one. They were an integral part of farm life during the time when families worked long, hard hours to complete the cycle of growing and preparing the tobacco, for market.

In the early days the tobacco was harvested once a week, and two or three handpicked leaves from each plant were brought in to the curing barns on mule-drawn sleds to begin the drying process. Often neighboring farmers would gather at each other's farms in July and August to "barn" the tobacco.

Once the curing was done, however, each family used its own pack house to begin grading and tying the leaves into bundles for market. When the family brought the cured crop into the pack barn, the leaves were placed on the floor. The farmer would sit at a grading bench, selecting the leaves by their placement on the plant stalk, their color and quality. Other family members gathered the leaves into bundles and tied the bundles in "hands" at the stalk end with another tobacco

Text and photos by Barbarba Sherwood

A tobacco grading bench used in pack houses is on display at the Tobacco Farm Life Museum in Kenly.

leaf. These were placed in flat layers separated by sticks. The stacks of tobacco were then put upstairs to wait for market.

According to Dorman Whitley, a retired farmer and volunteer at the Tobacco Farm Life Museum in Kenly, N.C., some farmers dug a shallow hole inside the pack barn, called an "ordering pit." Just before it was time to take the tobacco to market in November, the bundles were placed on racks over the pit and the moisture from the earth restored the leaves to a more pliable condition. Other growers collected a weed called dog fennel and placed it between the stacks to moisten the tobacco.

Today, Whitley noted, the 30 acres on which he and six neighboring farmers raised tobacco and other crops is farmed by one young man, along with 150 additional acres, using mechanized farm equipment. The pack houses are no longer needed because not only is the harvesting of the crop speeded up by mechanical pickers, but modern bulk curing barns, where the tobacco is dried, have shortened the curing process. Rather than relying on hand-fed, wood-burning furnaces as farmers did in the old barns, bulk curing barns can hold a far greater harvest and dry it more rapidly, using a forced-air, fuel-oil, natural or propane gas burning furnace. Once the tobacco is cured, it is taken in 250-pound burlap sheets to the warehouses where it is graded by federal standards graders before being sold at auction.

The Tobacco Farm Life Museum

U.S. 301, Kenly (between Wilson and Smithfield)
Take exit 107 from I-95.
Mon.–Sat. 9:30–5,
Sun. 2–5 p.m.
$3 adults, kids & seniors $2.
Kids under 2 free.
Phone: 919-284-3431
www.tobmuseum.bbnp.com

Since colonial days tobacco has been one of the economic mainstays of the southeastern states. It has provided a cash crop with which farmers could give their families a better of way of life and help support the business, social and religious communities in their area. To gain an insight into family and community life from the turn of the century to the Great Depression, plan to visit the Tobacco Farm Life Museum in Kenly. It is located a short drive from I-95 at exit 107. This delightful museum since 1983 has provided an overview of the way earlier generations lived and how labor-intensive it was for families to sustain themselves. Any woman seeing the kitchen stoves, from wood-burning to early gas, cannot help but praise modern technology. On the grounds of the museum are a restored homestead, circa 1909, and a curing barn.

According to Lynn Wagner, executive director, a reproduction pack house is due to open in winter.

Those pack houses that have been well maintained continue to proudly serve their families in a variety of ways. The abandoned ones we see in the fields that have been left to gently molder have acquired a certain romantic charm found only in the Southeast. Historically, they were part of the warp and woof of community life and deserve a moment's reflection about a time when the rhythm of the seasons provided a rich tapestry of unity and commitment.

Barbara Sherwood is a Florida-based freelance writer and member of National League of American Pen Women.

A curing barn and pack house, now used for storage at a campground in Selma.

Personal Computing Advice
by Reid Goldsborough

Where Should You Buy Your PC?

These days there are almost as many ways to buy a personal computer as there are ways to configure one.

You can buy from a computer superstore, small local computer store, office supply store, electronics store, department store, mass merchandise store, warehouse store, computer show, value-added reseller, mail-order catalog company, or directly from the manufacturer. To make things even more complicated, a number of vendors in the above categories now let you buy through the Internet.

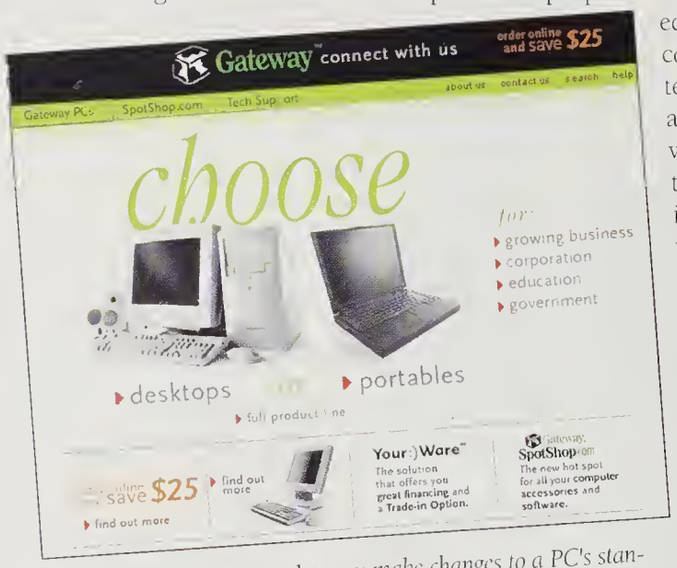
How do you decide where to get the biggest bang for your buck? Much depends on your particular situation. But each buying channel has its advantages and disadvantages, and some have more advantages than others.

Going Retail

Despite the newer whiz-bang buying options out there, walking into a store, sitting down in front of a number of display PCs, and taking a system back with you is still the most common way to buy a computer today.

Buying from a retail outlet can be reassuring if you don't have previous experience buying a computer. Looking at a monitor, testing out the feel of a keyboard, and seeing how much space the system takes up can be important clues to how you'll like the system once you get it back home or in the office.

On the other hand, you may think that being able to look your salesperson in the eye will help ensure you get a good deal. But some computer salespeople have little knowledge about computer technology, aside from which models the store has in stock and what their selling price is. This is particularly true with stores that don't specialize in computers. Likewise, you likely won't get expert support after the sale from department and discount stores.



Gateway 2000's Web site lets you make changes to a PC's standard configuration and instantly calculate the machine's price.

Still, there's something to be said about the instant gratification of being able to pick out a system and take it with you, which you don't receive when shopping with your phone or over the Internet.

Many people have had good experiences with smaller computer stores that others have recommended or that they've built relationships with over the years. Some of these stores sell their wares on weekends at computer shows held at racetracks and convention centers. Consider getting a recommendation first before buying an expensive system from an unknown vendor.

Value-added resellers are vendors that add value to the hardware they sell by including configuration, installation or training. You'll pay a bit more, but if you have specialized needs, the money spent can save you headaches later.

Using the Phone

Since the mid-1980s, the most intrepid computer shoppers have saved money by going the mail-order route. Though still commonly used, the term "mail order" is a bit of a misnomer these days, since you'll most likely use your phone to order your system and have it delivered through a courier service rather than the postal service.

There are two main ways to buy through the mail-order channel — directly from the manufacturer or from a catalog company that offers wares from different manufacturers.

In both cases, it's a smart move to stick to the better-known players. Top direct-to-consumer companies include Dell, Gateway 2000, and Micron, while the best catalog companies include PC Connection, PCs Complete, Insight, and Computer Discount Warehouse. More manufacturers are getting in the direct game, such as Apple, Compaq, and Sony.

Buying directly from a manufacturer usually means you can choose which components go into your PC rather than having to take a pre-configured unit. And it often means that the manufacturer saves money by not having to warehouse pre-configured systems. On the downside, it can take a few days to a few weeks for you to receive your PC.

Surfing the Internet

Net shopping is the latest option in buying PCs. Many PC vendors now offer Web-based shopping, including Gateway 2000, at www.gateway2000.com, and CompUSA, at www.compusanet.com, which both provide excellent sites.

Some Web sites make it easy to price-compare similar PCs from different manufacturers. Other sites offer a "configurator," an online tool for adding or subtracting components and quickly calculating the resulting price.

On the other hand, some sites provide only a moderate amount of detail about the systems offered, and they may not list all the available configurations or provide delivery dates. This forces you to phone a salesperson.

If you'd like to hear about others' experiences in shopping for PCs or share your own experiences, you can start or join a discussion in a relevant Usenet newsgroup, such as comp.sys.ibm.pc.hardware.systems or comp.sys.mac.hardware.misc.

Reid Goldsborough is a syndicated columnist and author of the book "Straight Talk About the Information Superhighway." He can be reached at reidgold@netaxs.com or http://members.home.net/reidgold.

Kid Stuff

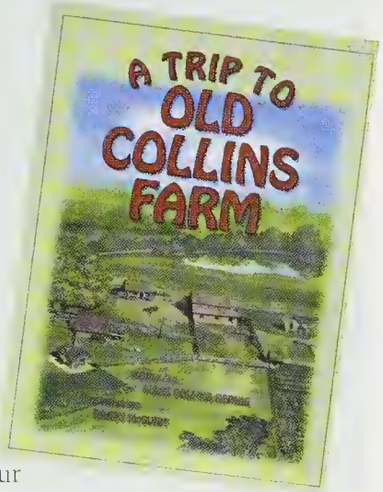
Compiled by Renee Gannon

Science Junction makes science fun for kids and parents

The Science House and N.C. State University's College of Education and Psychology have collaborated on a fun educational science Web site, Science Junction at www.ncsu.edu/sciencejunction.

The site features hands-on experiments, learning activities, as well as lesson plans and interactive resource materials for teachers and parents. The materials are developed in cooperation with middle and high school science teachers and pretested on students in grades six through 12. The Web site is updated monthly with new lesson plans, activities and resources.

A child's trip to a family farm



Mark Collins Hernig takes young readers on a child's-eye view of an elementary school field trip to a farm in his book "A Trip to Old Collins Farm." The book's narrator, Jenny, tells the readers about the animals she saw and what she learned on the farm, as well as the fun she had.

The farm in the book is actually Hernig's place in Waxhaw, served by Union EMC. It was passed down from his late grandparents. A few years ago, he started offering educational field trips to his farm, birthday parties and farm camps. "With the continuing disappearance of small family farms, I believe it is important to keep people in touch with our agrarian," says Hernig.

The book is illustrated by Randy McGuirt of Mineral Springs, N.C. It is available at Barnes & Noble stores in North Carolina and parts of the southeastern United States, and retails for $17. Local bookstores may also order the book. Or call (800) 917-BOOK.

Gates County tapestry print sale benefits the old courthouse restoration for 210th anniversary

Gates County's 200th Anniversary Needlepoint Tapestry

photo by Carol Phillips, Phillips Photography & Design

In 1979, a just-completed tapestry composed of 54 squares of virgin wool needlepoint, each made by a local church or club to celebrate Gates County's 200th anniversary, was hung in the New Courthouse in Gatesville.

For the county's 210th anniversary, a print of the tapestry is available. The full-color, 16- by 20-inch print may be purchased for $20 plus $2 shipping. Proceeds from the print benefit the restoration of the Old Gates County Courthouse, ca. 1836. The old courthouse is home to the County Library and the Thad Eure Museum.

To order, make a $22 check out to Gates County Historical Society, and mail to Gates County Historical Society, c/o Louise Lyon, Rt. 1, Box 14, Eure, NC 27935.

Win a truck, help Hospice

Hospice of Davidson County is selling $100 raffle tickets through Aug. 6. Only 500 tickets are available for a chance to win either a 1999 Dodge Dakota or $13,000. All proceeds will benefit the Hospice of Davidson County. The winner will be announced Aug. 7 on AM 1440 WLXN around 4 p.m. The winner will also be notified by phone.

A dinner and silent auction will also be held Aug. 7 at the Sapona Country Club. Tickets are $50 and all proceeds benefit the Hospice.

For more information, call the Hospice of Davidson County in Lexington at (336) 248-6185.

N.C. Department of Transportation asks for planning help

The North Carolina Department of Transportation is developing a strategic plan and is asking for the public's help. The plan will provide for a long-range, statewide planning process, as well as provide the DOT with additional guidance on day-to-day operations.

NC DOT's vision is to provide transportation choices, ensure public safety, promote economic opportunities, protect the environment and enhance quality of life

To offer advice, use the public response option at their Web site at www.dot.state.nc.us; send e-mail to NCDOTstrategicplan@dot.state.nc.us; write to NCDOT Strategic Plan, PO Box 25201, Raleigh, NC 27611; or call the Customer Service Office toll-free at (877) DOT-4YOU.

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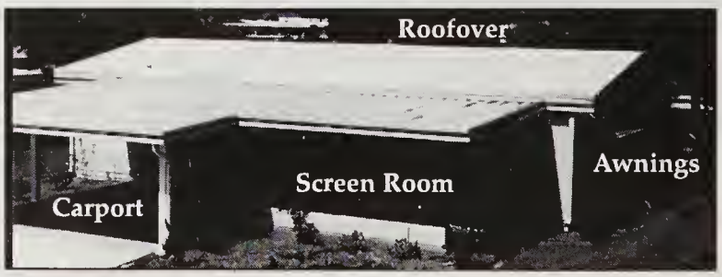

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Digit Detection

	L	U	C	A	M	A
9						
8				X		X
7				X		X
6						
5						
4						
3				X		X
2	X			X		X
1	X					
0	X					

Town Square

Given the simultaneous equations below, can you find the value of LUCAMA? Each letter stands for a digit. Use the grid to eliminate impossibilities, i.e. no square ends in 2, 3, 7 or 8. Therefore A is not 2, 3, 7 or 8. No number less than 32 has a four-digit square. Therefore L is greater than 2.

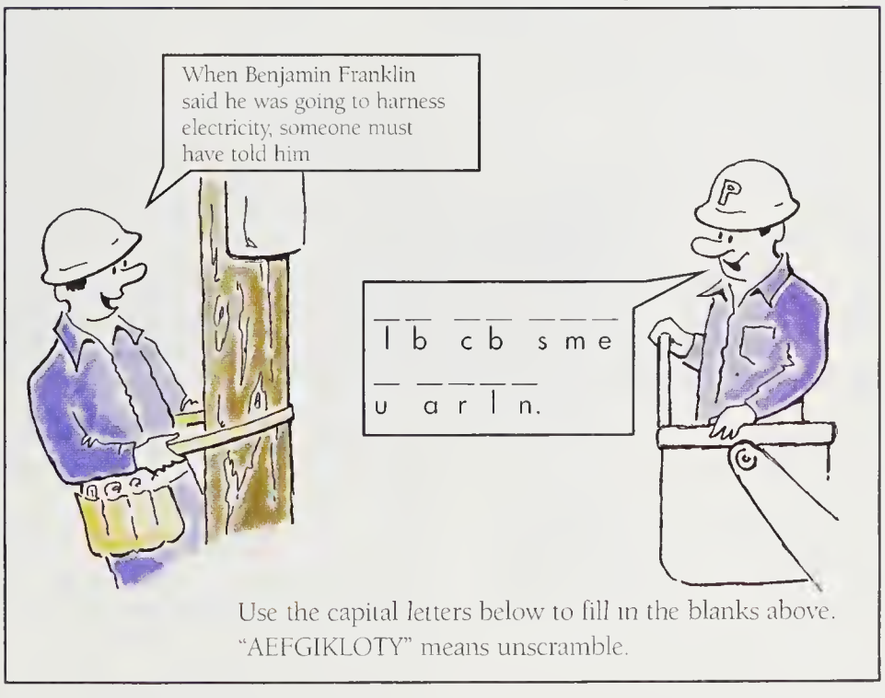
$(LU)^2 = CAMA$
$U+U = A$
$U + A = M$
$A + A = C$
LUCAMA =

(Lucama is a pleasant town on Highway 301 in Wilson County. According to The North Carolina Gazetteer, tradition says it was named by Josephus Daniels in 1883, who was editor of a newspaper in Wilson at the time, for three friends: Lucy, Carrie and Mary.)

Who's From Where?

Ann, Dan, Lee, Ralph, Tom, and Troy are from Alexander, Cumberland, Montgomery, Northampton, Randolph, and Transylvania counties, but not in that order. Who is from where, and why have they been singled out?

Percy P. Cassidy



Use the capital letters below to fill in the blanks above. "AEFGIKLOTY" means unscramble.

Southern Exposure

The elderly guest of honor at a social event in Franklin was generally known to have been ill for a long time, so it seemed worthwhile to explain that this was the first such event that her health had permitted her to attend in years.

As it appeared in The Franklin Press, an item about the function read, "The party was the wirst such event Mrs. Lyle had attended in years . . ."

Weimer Jones, then publisher and editor of The Press, told this story in his book, "My Affair With a Weekly," published in 1960.

Answers on page 37.

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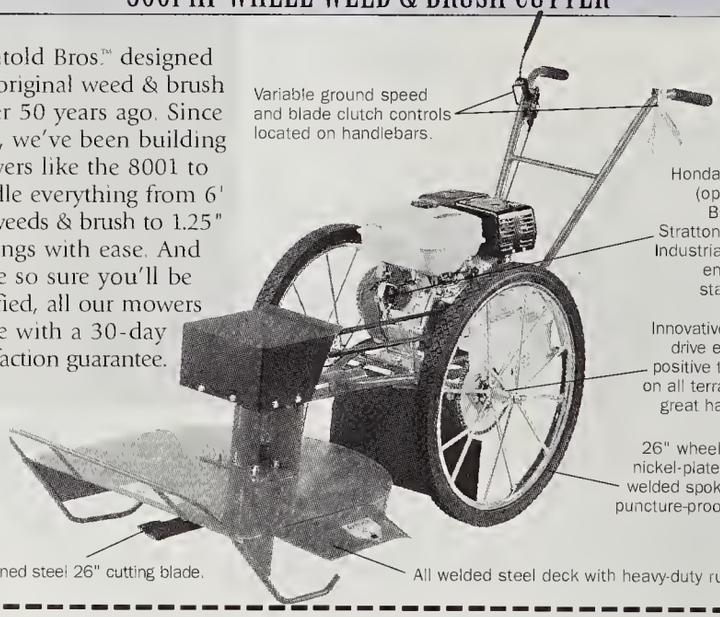
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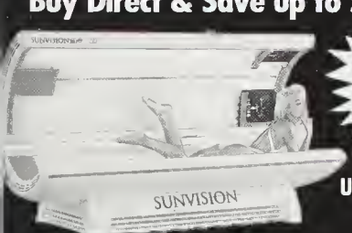

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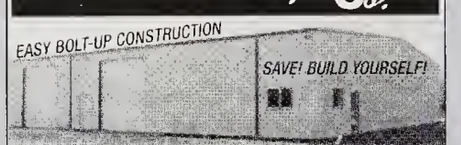

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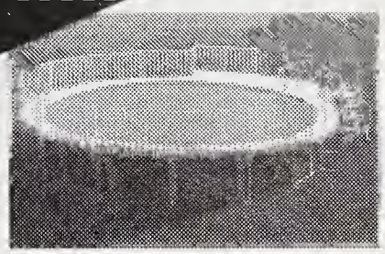

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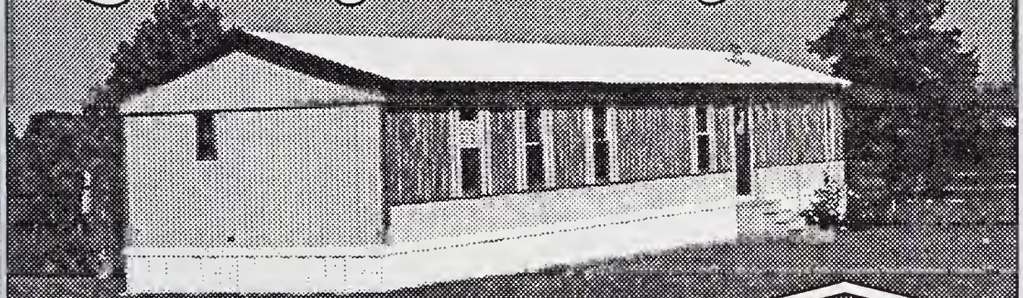

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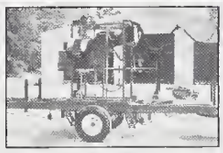

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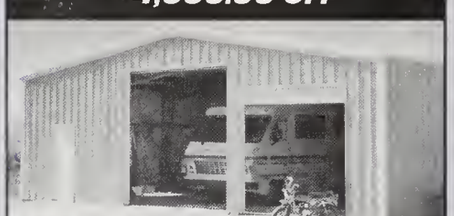

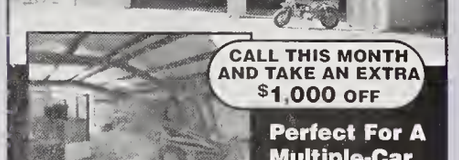

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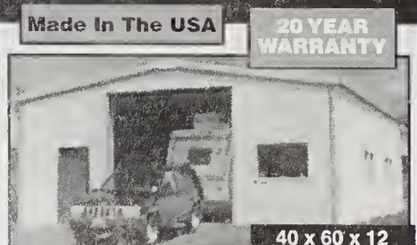

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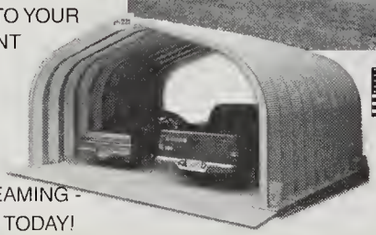

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Mountain Dance and Folk Festival
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"Music Man"
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Lets Get Small
Aug. 5-28, Lenoir
Art exhibit,
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Mt. Mitchell Crafts Fair
Aug. 6-7, Burnsville
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Smokey Bear's Birthday Party
Aug. 7, Pisgah Forest
Cradle of Forestry,
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Bluegrass and Olde Time Fiddlers Convention
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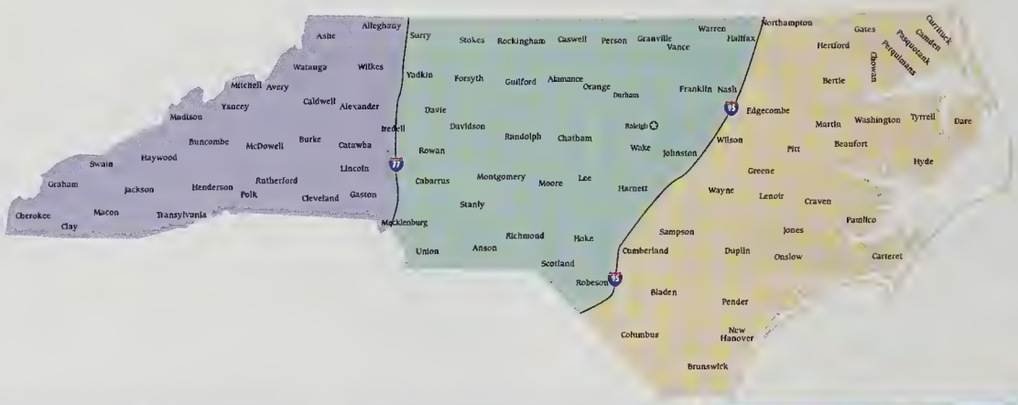

N.C. Furnishings Festival
Aug. 7-8, High Point
Industry Pride Pavilion,
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N.C. CATCH Workshop
Aug. 9-10, Pisgah Forest
Pisgah Center for Wildlife
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Antiques and Collectibles Fair
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Main and Park Street,
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Aug. 23-29, Waynesville
Haywood Community College
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Water Quality & Stream Life
Aug. 28, Pisgah Forest
Pisgah Center for Wildlife
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Julie Adams & The Rhino Boys
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Concert
Aug. 4, Winston-Salem
Soprano Lisa Davis, Reynolda
House, 8 p.m., $3,
(336) 725-5325

"I Am Woman"
Aug. 5-Sept. 30, Gastonia
Art exhibit, Art 1, (704) 854-8800

Wheels & Roads
Aug. 7, Spencer
Family Fun Saturday, N.C.
Transportation Museum,
(704) 636-2889

Stovall Festival
Aug. 7, Stovall
Downtown, 10 a.m.-11 p.m.,
(919) 693-4310

Traditional Music Family Concert
Aug. 8, Raleigh
N.C. Museum of Art, 7 p.m.,
free, (919) 715-5923

Foothills Music Festival
Aug. 11, 14, 20, 21, 28,
Winston-Salem
Reynolda House, (336) 725-5325

Watermelon Day
Aug. 12, Raleigh
State Farmers Market,
(919) 733-7417

"Goldenleaf"
Aug. 13-14, 19-22, 26-28, Raleigh
Play, Theatre in the Park,
(919) 831-6936

Hummingbird Mornings
Aug. 13-15, Belmont
Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens,
(704) 825-4490

BikeFest: Rural Heritage Tour
Aug. 14, Hillsborough
Downtown, 8 a.m., $15,
(919) 966-4196

Tarheel Farm Toy Show & Auction
Aug. 14, Burlington
Ramada Inn Convention Center, $3,
under 12 free with adult,
(336) 584-9829

Summer Wing Ding & Butterfly Count
Aug. 14-15, Durham
N.C. Museum of Life and Science,
(919) 220-5429

Children's Concert
Aug. 18, Winston-Salem
Foothills Music Festival, Reynolda
House, 7 p.m., $5, (336) 725-5325

Africa Fete '99
Aug. 20, Raleigh
N.C. Museum of Art, 7 p.m.,
(919) 715-5923

Settin' Up with the Dead
Aug. 21, Pinnacle
19th century burial customs, Horne
Creek Farm, 1 p.m., (336) 325-2298

N.C. Jazz Repertory Orchestra
Aug. 21, Raleigh
N.C. Museum of Art, 8 p.m.,
(919) 715-5923

"Rocky Horror Picture Show"
Aug. 27, Winston-Salem
Summer film series, Southeastern
Center for Contemporary Art, 8
p.m., $5, (336) 725-1904

Grape Stomp
Aug. 28, Raleigh
State Farmers Market,
(919) 733-7417

Coastal Plain (east of I-95)

Glory Days: Coastal Carolina Baseball
Through Oct. 31, Elizabeth City
Museum of the Albemarle, Free,
(252) 335-1453

Queen Anne's Revenge Exhibit
Through Aug. 17, Beaufort
North Carolina Maritime Museum,
free, (252) 728-7317

Watermelon Festival
Aug. 4-7, Murfreesboro
Downtown, (252) 398-5922

Summer Reader's Theatre
Aug. 11, Elizabeth City
Waterfront, 7 p.m., free,
(252) 338-1697

Shrimp Festival
Aug. 14-15, Sneads Ferry
$2 adults, children under 12 free,
(910) 327-4911

Hatteras Island Craft Show
Sept. 3-4, Hatteras
Civic Center, (252) 995-4656

Deadlines:
Oct. . . . .Aug 25
Nov. . . . .Sept. 24
Dec. . . . .Oct. 26

A phone number must be included with event listings in order to be published.

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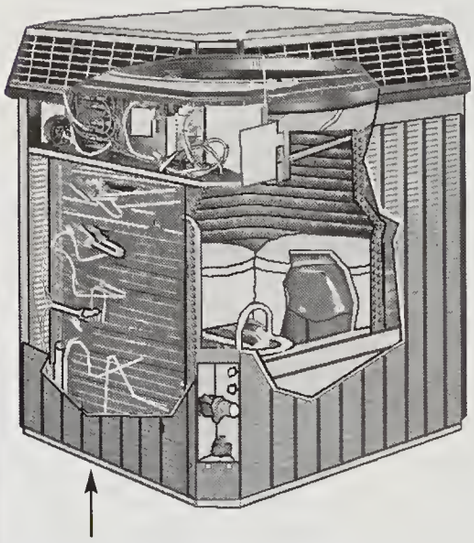
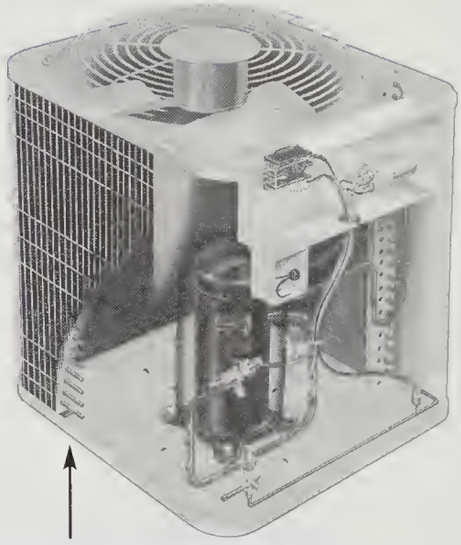
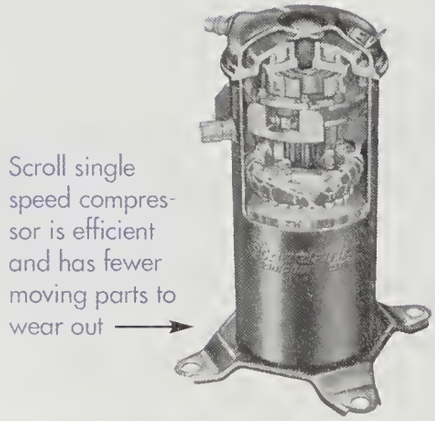


Two-motor/compressor model with special top to block leaves, dirt and debris.



Single compressor model which uses new ozone-friendly R410A refrigerant with vertical air discharge at top.



Scroll single speed compressor is efficient and has fewer moving parts to wear out

New central air conditioner designs are quiet, efficient

There have been many significant changes and improvements in central air conditioners over just the past several years. Some changes will lower your utility bills, some improve your family's comfort level and still others improve the environment.

One of the most significant improvements is in the increase in efficiency levels. Some models have SEERs (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratios) as high as 18. Compared to your old one at only 8 at best, your electric bills may be cut by more than half. In most cases, installing a new one is a wise financial decision even if your old one still works.

The best new models, and most efficient, are actually a step back in complexity, but a step forward in reliability and comfort. Gone are the complicated totally variable speed compressors of the mid-90's. They worked well, but were extremely expensive to produce. With better computerized controls now, simpler two-speed and two-compressor models are as effective.

For the best comfort and indoor air quality, lowest utility bills and indoor/outdoor noise levels, a new multilevel cooling output model is an excellent choice. These top-end models may cost as much as 20 percent to 30 percent more than a typical single-level model, so you must consider both the lower utility bills and evaluate the value of the extra comfort.

These multilevel output models operate at a super efficient lower-cooling output level the majority of the time. At this quiet low level, they run longer for better dehumidification and constant indoor temperatures. This makes them a good choice in areas where summer humidity is a factor. They only switch to the highest-output level on the hottest afternoons.

For people with allergies, the fact that these models run at a lower output level is an advantage. With the central air conditioner and blower running longer, the central air cleaner operates longer and is more effective. Also, with reduced and more constant dehumidification, mold and dust mites can be better controlled.

All of these multilevel models use special, efficient (ICM or ECM) blower motors indoors. The speed of these motors can be varied by the electronic controls so that the air flow is perfectly matched to the varying cooling needs of your house and compressor cooling output. Standard blower motors run at a single cooling speed no matter how hot or humid it is.

By the design of these blower motors, they also consume much less electricity. This makes them ideal for continuous air circulation without driving up your electric bills too much. Another advantage is that these motors have soft-start controls. They slowly ramp up to full speed for quiet, no-draft (for winter heating also) air circulation too.

Many of the reasonably priced, single-level models use scroll compressors without pistons and valves. It compresses the refrigerant in a constant process of rotating scroll-shaped members. There are very few moving parts inside and they actually wear in over time and operate better.

Models with scroll compressors are reliable and quiet with efficiencies up to a SEER of 14. Installing one of these will still cut your electric bills significantly. For climates with steady summer weather conditions, these designs are ideal.

Several models now use ozone-friendly R410A (called Puron by some manufacturers) refrigerant instead of freon. Current R-22 freon will eventually be phased out of use by law. There were two new ozone-friendly refrigerants being considered, but it appears in 1999 that the R410A is the way that most manufacturers will go.

There are also other advantages of these new R410A-refrigerant models. They operate at higher pressures, requiring heavy, stronger tubing and compressors. This also makes them durable and quiet. With R410A, the overall size of the outdoor compressor unit can be smaller for a given SEER.

For a buyer's guide of the most efficient multi- and single-level central air conditioners, cooling outputs, SEERs, comfort features, warranties and a payback chart, write for Update Bulletin No. 908 (or instantly download it from www.dulley.com). Please include $3 and a business-size SASE.

Contact James Dulley, Carolina Country, P.O. Box 54987, Cincinnati, OH 45254.

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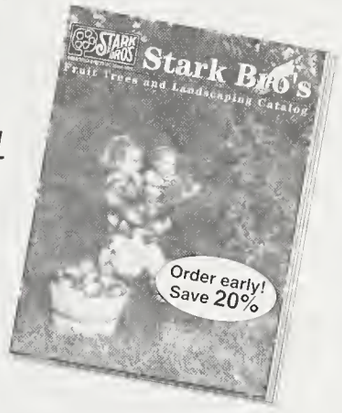

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by Hank Smith

August tips

1. Start seed of cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, mustard, green beans, spinach, turnips and beets for the fall garden. Leaf and head lettuce should do well.

2. Control weeds in your summer vegetable garden. Mulch and water when needed.

3. Grasslike growth on daylily flower stalks can be pulled off and rooted in moist sand. This is helpful in propagating favorite varieties.

4. Spray roses every 7 to 10 days for control of black spot, thrips and canker.

5. Apply preemergence herbicide for control of next year's chickweed, if you are not opposed to chemical control.

6. Bearded iris will appear neater if brown side leaves are removed. There's no need to shear across tops unless plants are moved to a new location.

7. If your home has poor orientation, eliminate effects of hot summer sun by using deciduous trees. When bare in winter, they allow sun to help warm indoors.

8. Feed bedding plants to encourage late summer and early fall blooms.

9. Select crape myrtles at garden centers while plants are in bloom to assure you get desired colors.

10. When planting trees and large-growing shrubs, always look up, to the back and on sides to make certain the mature plant will have growing space. Crape myrtle shrubs grow into trees and should be planted where they can reach their potential without heavy pruning. Always avoid planting large-growing plants beneath windows.

11. Use back of rake to remove unsightly toadstools from the lawn. Spraying with a fungicide aids in keeping down toadstool growth.

12. No occupation is so delightful as the culture of the earth. But old man as I am, I am a young gardener – *Thomas Jefferson.*

Cuttings of many shrubs seem to root better and faster if made now.

In the month of August, gardeners look ahead to autumn. Now's the time to survey garden areas to make notes of what needs to be added, as well as any plants that need to be moved or eliminated from the landscape scene. Cuttings of many shrubs seem to root better and faster if made now. During August and September, seed of perennials such as Snow in Summer, delphinium, hollyhock, daisies, flax, pyrethrum and Stoke's aster should be planted in order to produce vigorous plants for next spring. Bright yellow marigolds carry summer's color into autumn. They're a good complement to dahlias and chrysanthemums of the fall season.

Summer prune if necessary

Trees and shrubs that have produced an excessively heavy summer growth need pruning to thin out unnecessary branches and foliage. If fruit trees have formed a thick "head" of leafy branches, prune to thin and open the canopy. Remove branches at the main trunk. Cut at a slope so moisture will drip from the wound-cut and not work downward unto healthy wood where it can cause problems later. Many horticulturists coat the cut with pruning wound paint. If fruit set is heavy on fruiting trees, thin away some small fruitlets to force energy into forming larger fruit. Shrubs and evergreen vines, trained into distinctive topiary and espalier patterns may be pruned at any time of year that new growth does not conform to the desired pattern. Flower buds are now forming on camellias. Some plants may need an early disbudding when buds are thickly clustered on a stem. By removing side buds and leaving choice tip buds to form, a much larger and better-shaped flower will develop. Rhododendrons need deblossoming as faded blooms sap plant energy needed to produce abundant flower buds. If rhodie leaves droop and curl inward, they are in need of moisture. Keep all plants well mulched and watered.

Plants on the rocks

In late afternoon or early morning after a rain, spend a bit of time in the rock garden. That's a good time to remove any weeds or grass that may compete with desired plants for food and moisture. Weed carefully. Hold down the weed with spread fingers of one hand while pulling the weed with the other. Be especially gentle around spring-flowering perennials and bulbs that have lost their top growth during summer. After weeding, add a handful of loamy soil mixed with moistened peat moss. Work between nutrients and any soil that may have washed away.

Rooting dwarf boxwood

Sprigs of dwarf boxwood can be planted in trenches of good soil, and they should be watered often. Dip the cut stems in Root Tone powder before planting. Remove lower leaves and cut on a slant to expose more of stem. New boxwoods may be left in trenches until next spring, then transplanted to desired locations. Dwarf boxwoods are good beneath-window plants, as they easily are kept in bounds beneath the windowsills.

Christmas poinsettias

During August and September, give potted poinsettias at least six hours of sunlight each day. Fertilize with complete fertilizer every two or three weeks. Early in October, bring plants indoors. Place in an east window during the day. Every night move plants to a dark closet for 10 to 12 hours or cover with black plastic bags. Poinsettia is a photoperidic plant that requires extended darkness to produce blooms and colorful bracts.

Landscape planning

Simplicity is an easy factor to overlook in creating, planning and planting a good, functional landscape design. Simple, clean-cut forms and lines are more interesting than complex, intricate schemes, which often are difficult to comprehend. In most cases, a simple unaffected landscape plan is easier to maintain.

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Joyner's Corner Answers

Who's From Where?
The letters in each name appear in that person's country of residence.
Ann could be from Northampton or Transylvania. Tom could be from Northampton or Montgomery. But Troy can only be from Montgomery. Therefore Tom is from Northampton and Ann is from Transylvania.
Dan could be from Alexander, Cumberland, or Randolph. But Ralph can only be from Randolph. Lee can only be from Alexander. Therefore, Dan is from Cumberland.

Digit Detection
LUCAMA = 928464

Percy P Cassidy
To go fly a kite.

Summer Kabobs!

Beautiful weather tempts even avid cooks to spend more time outdoors and less time in the kitchen. Here's a main dish you can season in a snap.

Broiled Beef Kabobs

1 tablespoon olive or vegetable oil
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon water
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon honey
1 /2 teaspoon dried oregano
1 /4 teaspoon pepper
1 pound boneless top sirloin steak (1 inch thick), cut into 1-inch cubes
2 small green and/or sweet red peppers, cut into 1-inch pieces
12 large, fresh mushrooms
Hot cooked rice

In a bowl, combine the first seven ingredients; mix well. Add beef, peppers and mushrooms; toss to coat. Thread meat and vegetables alternately on metal or soaked wooden skewers. Broil 3 inches from the heat, turning often, until meat reaches desired doneness and vegetables are tender, about 12-16 minutes. Serve over rice. Yield: 4 servings.

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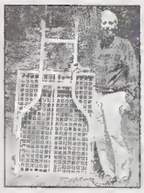
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